

# THE MORNING NEWS

Your Source for local news in English

Caya G.F. Betico Croes 111 T. 588-9517 F. 5889518.

## Nelson (Madiba) Mandela laid to rest



QUNU (AFP) - Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first black president, was laid to rest yesterday after a state funeral filled with tearful eulogies and strident vows to pursue his ideals of equality and justice.

Mandela's casket was buried at a family plot in his rural boy-

hood home of Qunu, watched by his widow Graca Machel, ex-wife Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, other family members and around 450 selected guests.

The interment followed a ceremonial state funeral that ran well over its allotted two hours, as speaker after speaker paid

emotional tribute to the man who led South Africa out of the apartheid era.

"The person who lies here is South Africa's greatest son," said ANC deputy president Cyril Ramaphosa.

A 21-gun salute and full military honour guard had escorted Mandela's coffin to the marquee where 4,500 mourners said their final goodbyes.

His flag-draped casket was placed on cowskins, surrounded by 95 candles -- one for each year of his extraordinary life.

The frail and ageing leaders of South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle also attended: George Bizos, Desmond Tutu and Ahmed Kathrada, whose voice broke as he delivered a eulogy for his old friend.

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QUNU : This handout photo taken and released by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) shows the coffin of South African former President Nelson Mandela at the burial site in Qunu. (AFP)

## Celebrating Volunteers Day at Club Kibrahacha 60+



On the 5th of December was International Day of Volunteers. Club Kibrahacha de-

cided not to let the day go by unnoticed. They organized an afternoon especially for all

volunteers. This celebration took place on the patio of the Club Kibrahacha 60+. All volunteers of the Club were invited guests of honor. They were not allowed to do any kind of work, just to enjoy the afternoon.

The afternoon began with words of welcome by Board of Director President, Ephraim de Lannooy, also from Eric d'Arnauld ex-president and Jeffrey Matos. They had words of gratitude for the good work that the volunteers do. They indicated that the more than 25 years of the existence of the Club would not have been possible without the help of volunteers. They are the machinery of the Club. Their work is an inspiration to all.

The volunteer of the year this year went to Elvira Korsen. Elvira loves what she does; this reflects in the care she gives to members as well as to other volunteers. She is practically at the Club every day and always with a smile, ready to help. Pabien to Elvira!

Everyone was able to enjoy a delicious meal prepared by Mo Bagheri. After the meal they enjoyed delightful music. Each volunteer received a Christmas gift at the close of the evening.

*Continued on page 4*

  
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## SETAR signs agreement with baseball idol Xander Boogaerts



SEROE BLANCO -- During a recent press conference SETAR (local telephone company) signed an agreement with baseball idol, the Aruban Great League pitcher, Xander Boogaerts. As part of the agreement, SETAR will promote the image of Xander Boogaerts as a symbol of excellence in sports. Xander's image will be a stimulus for Aruban youth to also work hard to reach their goals and be excellent in sports.

Xander's image will be on Billboards, bus stops, busses, posters, newspapers, face book, etc. The agreement also includes a television spot, exclusive interview and recordings during spring training for TeleAruba.

One of the interesting aspects of the agreement is that Xander Boogaerts's image will be printed on SETAR's prepaid cards which will remain as collector's items.

Continued on page 3

## Shoppers are reminded of the "Reason for the Season" at Paseo Herencia



Yea, praise Jesus

ORANJESTAD -- Executive management of Paseo Herencia shopping center are certainly pleased by all those that come to shop and stroll their aisles while preparing for the holidays. They are welcoming many visitors to the mall that come to peruse the shops, dine in their restaurants and enjoy the nearly nightly programs showcasing the regional culture associated with this festive season.

However, the management also appreciates and wished to share the true spirit of the season, the celebration of the birth of a savior, and so hosted a concert program on Friday evening, December 13 titled "Reason for the Season."

Visitors from the U.S. and Latin America sat side by side and were stirred by the sincere, heartfelt homage performed by "Youth Heart for Jesus" singers and New Life Tabernacle Worship band. A rousing opening number, "Clap Your Hands for Jesus," had the audience readily joining along in the joyous celebration.

Noted island dancers Dyantha Maduro and Swesdy Beeldsnijder were also part of the poignant program, a reminder of the spirituality at the core of Christmas, not to be forgotten by the tinsel and trappings that so often distracts shoppers.

"We believe that every as-



Dancers Swesdy and Dyantha Maduro with Candy Rasmijn of Paseo



Youth Heart for Jesus from the New Life Tabernacle.



Clapping their hands for Jesus

pect of the holiday is fun and exciting," commented Paseo Herencia Marketing Manager Candy Rasmijn. "However, we should not let the important message of love and peace be lost in all the frenzy of entertaining and gift shopping. We

at the mall are always conscious of our connection to the community, particularly at this time of year. We enjoy providing all these evenings of entertainment, but were thrilled to present this especially lovely message to our patrons."

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## SETAR signs agreement...

*Continued from page 2*



In addition to the cooperation for promotion of Setar's products and services, they will also promote the baseball sport by raffling entrances to the first games of the season during Caiso and Soca Monarch Contest. SETAR will also raffle tickets for the games of the

Baseball World Series.

Xander Boogaerts will be the icon for sports and excellence and SETAR will promote Aruba and motivate all to have excellence in sports. Xander received a Smartphone and free subscription as gifts from SETAR.

## Grand experiment at Sunset Grille proves a tasty success



**F and B**  
**Manager Mark Naber**

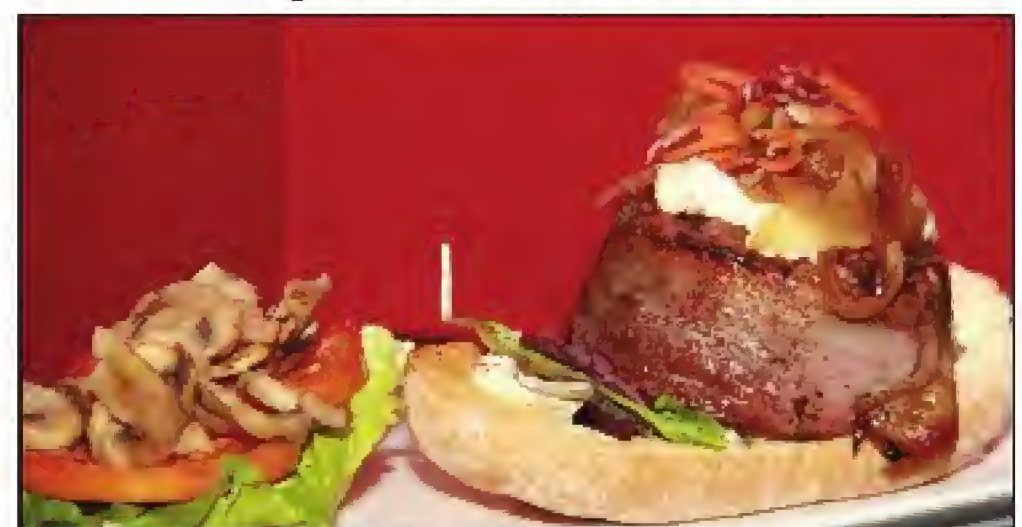
ORANJESTAD -- The Sunset Grille at the Radisson Resort, Casino and Spa in Palm Beach earned a four-diamond rating several years in a row, as they were famous for their superb steaks and innovative treatment of poultry and seafood. On Friday evening, December 13, they conducted a mouth-watering culinary experiment under the deft supervision of veteran Executive Chef Kien-Fat Lie-Kwie.

Director of Food & Beverage Mark Naber explained that with so many fine eateries on Aruba competing for guest's attention, the resort is well aware that their signature restaurant needs to also deliver to patrons "exciting and unique dining experiences."

"Gourmet burgers are all the rage in New York at present," he remarked. "So we decided to measure guest response to our version of such a menu." For one night only, they offered a tempting selections, such as "Filet Mignon 'burger,'" Sesame Seed Tuna, Crab Cakes with Shrimp, or for traditionalists, a juicy ground beef burger, of course



**Angus beef stuffed mushrooms**



**Filet Mignon on a bun**



**Chilean Sea Bass**

prepared with top quality Angus Beef tenderloin.

They even had a "Veggie Stack," of grilled vegetables, sandwiched between two huge Portobello mushroom caps, or Chilean Sea Bass, all prepared with Sunset Grille's amazing signature sauces, which put any fast food franchise to shame. All items were pre-

pared in a way that suggested a sandwich, but often required consumption with knife and fork. For example, the amazing hunk of prime filet mignon was served in toasted French bread, but was best consumed as an open-faced sandwich.

*Continued on page 4*

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 Calco "Conch" in Creole or garlic sauce US\$ 21.70 AFIs. 38.00  
 (Includes: Rice, coleslaw, french fries & fried plantain)  
 Panfried Lobster 6 oz. US\$ 20.00 AFIs. 35.00  
 (Includes: Rice, coleslaw, french fries & fried plantain)

### Special Plates

Chicken Sate US\$ 10.85 AFIs. 19.00  
 (Includes: french fries & peanut sauce)  
 Fillet Mignon 6 oz (Angus) US\$ 18.30 AFIs. 32.00  
 (Includes: Rice, coleslaw french fries & fried plantain)  
 Extra side orders US\$ 3.00 AFIs. 5.00  
 (Rice, coleslaw, french fries, fried plantain)

Ask for the Soup of the Day

Italiestraat # 50 (Orange Plaza) Closed on Mondays



*Paseo Herencia*  
"nos orguyo... Aruba's pride"

## Holiday WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

**MONDAY CULTURAL NIGHT**  
Cultural Dance Show by a local dance group on main stage at 8pm

**THURSDAY SPECTACULAR FANTASY NIGHT**  
An acrobatic dance show on main stage at 8pm

**FRIDAY CARIBBEAN PAN NIGHT**  
Steel pan Music Live on main stage at 8 pm

**SATURDAY TRADITIONAL GAITAS**  
Gaitas Show live on stage from 7pm - 9pm

**SUNDAY LOCAL ARTIST**  
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## 52 professionals working in Aruba's Tourism Industry receive a 5 years ServSafe Management Certification



ORANJESTAD -- AHATA, in collaboration with the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa, Divi Mega Resorts, The Westin Resort & Casino Aruba, Tiara Air Aruba and La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino, recently organized a ServSafe Management &

Certification Program which took place over two days at the Alhambra Ballroom.

The ServSafe program provides managers with essential food safety practices that help them create a culture of food safety within their departments. This is the

only food safety program with roots in the food service industry to help protect customers' health, improve employees' performance and preserve business reputation.

*Continued on page 5*

## Celebrating Volunteers Day

*Continued from page 1*



Club Kibrahacha 60+ is proud of all volunteers of Aruba. Aruba can be proud of the work that volunteers do. May God bless them and help them to continue the valuable work they do for their fellowmen.

Anyone desiring to become a member of the Club may contact telephone 582-8159 or visit them personally at Piedra Plat 23. Visit the Club's website and/or like the Club's Facebook page.

## Grand experiment at Sunset Grille...

*Continued from page 3*

The spectacular crab cakes were accompanied by grilled jumbo shrimp, proving to filling to finish; this was definitely a main dish that could be shared by two.

Chef Lie-Kwie, also invented an impressive selection of appetizers, for those who wished to balance out their beef burger with a taste of the delectable crab cakes. A special menu of "milk shakes" included exotic cocktails with ice cream as a principal ingredient, providing a modern, gourmet twist on old-time malt shop fare. Staffers were also prepared to suggest an excellent wine selection, with vintages chosen by the chef to be paired with and enhance the various dishes.

The famous restaurant is interested in the input of their patrons regarding innovations to their menu, and plan to make the most popular items a regular offering, or repeating their unique theme nights.



**Crab cake appetizer with sumptuous ice cream cocktails**



## Joyce Melisa Morgan honored at Paradise Beach Villas



Recently, the Aruba Tourism Authority honored Joyce Melisa Morgan, resident of Corona New York, as Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. She has been coming here for 11 years.

The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba between ten and 20 consecutive years.

Joyce Melisa Morgan is an internationally famous Recording Artist in the United States and around the world. She enjoys when she comes to Aruba and her musician friend David Cousins, who has a band called Joyride, always ask her to come sing with him. This year, they performed at the Pier at a Club called Bugaloe's.

So, even though they have sang with Whitney Houston, written for Mary J. Blige and Jay-Z. When they need down time, they come to the little place at Paradise Beach Villas in Aruba and relax at one The Best beaches in the world -Eagle beach, relax by the pool, reconnect with friends and sing a song or two because that what Aruba does for her... It brings out The Best in her!

A handsome certificate was presented to her by Aruba Tourism Authority representative Darline de Cuba at Paradise Beach Villas.

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## 52 professionals receive ServSafe Management Certification

*Continued from page 4*

52 participants successfully completed the exam graded by the American National Standard Institute and received their 5 years ServSafe Management Certification during a ceremony organized by AHATA on Monday, December 2nd at the Sunset Garden Ballroom located at

Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort.

A big Thank you goes to all participants for their enthusiasm and to all companies that had their management representatives attend this training:

Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa, Aruba Ostrich Farm,

The Mill Resort & Suites, Gari & Wasabi Aruba, Marriott Aruba Ocean Club, Marriott Aruba Surf Club, Grand Occidental Aruba, Chalet Suisse Restaurant, Talk of The Town Beach Resort, The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba, Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort & Casino, Tiara Air Aruba, The

Westin Resort & Casino, Aruba, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resorts, White Modern Cuisine, Divi Mega Resorts, University of Aruba, Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association, La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino.





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## Nelson Mandela laid to rest

Continued from page 1

"I first met him 67 years ago," said Kathrada, who along with Mandela was sentenced to life in prison in 1963.

He recalled his fellow inmate as a powerful amateur boxer who could cope far better than others with the physical challenge of hard labour.

"What I saw in hospital was a man helpless and reduced to a shadow of himself," he said, struggling not to break down.

"Farewell my dear brother, my mentor, my leader."

"Now I've lost a brother, my life is in a void and I don't know who to turn to."

### A towering public figure

Kathrada's words left many in tears among the invited guests, whose ranks included foreign dignitaries and celebrities ranging from Britain's Prince Charles to US talk show queen Oprah Winfrey.

The funeral closed the final chapter in the life of a towering public figure whose courage and moral fortitude turned him into a global symbol of freedom and hope.

During 10 days of mourning, hundreds of thousands of South Africans had turned out across the country to bid farewell to the founding father of their "Rainbow Nation".

They braved a rain-sodden memorial in Soweto and for three days queued to see his remains lying in state at Pretoria's Union Buildings.

For 50 million compatriots, Mandela was not just a president, but a moral guide who led them away from intransigent racial conflict.

"Ever since he passed away, I wanted to walk the journey with him," said Pascal Moloi, 52, who came from Johannesburg to watch with Mandela's fellow villagers.

While Mandela had been critically ill for months, the announcement of his death on December 5 still sent a spasm through a country struggling to carry forward his vision of a harmonious multi-racial democracy of shared prosperity.

During the funeral, Presi-

dent Jacob Zuma told the country to carry on Mandel's legacy.

"One thing we can assure you of today, tata (father), as you take your final steps, is that South Africa will continue to rise.

"South Africa will continue to rise because we dare not fail you," Zuma said.

### A private goodbye

After the ceremony, Mandela's coffin was transported to a graveyard sitting on the sprawling family estate that Mandela built in Qunu after his release from prison in 1990.

"It was in that village that I spent some of the happiest years of my boyhood and whence I trace my earliest memories," he wrote in his autobiography.

As the coffin was lowered into the ground, six jets flew over the gravesite in a "missing man formation", usually reserved for tributes to a fallen pilot.

After a life spent in the public spotlight, Mandela's final rites were a fiercely private affair.

A family deprived of their husband and father during his 27 years in apartheid prisons and many more years in public service seized it as an intimate last goodbye to a man who meant much to millions.

A live television broadcast followed the coffin to the graveside but was cut after several minutes in line with the family's wishes.

Overseen by male members of his clan in line with traditional Xhosa rites, the burial included the slaughter of an ox -- a ritual marking of a life's milestones.

Mandela was referred to throughout as Dalibhunga, the name given to him at the age of 16 after undergoing the initiation to adulthood.

After the ceremony Bizo - who was Mandela's defence lawyer -- echoed the heart-break of a nation.

"We have known each other for 65 years," Bizo said, "now he is gone."



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## First UN aid flight from Iraq lands in Syria

BAGHDAD, December 15, 2013 (AFP) - The first UN aid flight from Iraq landed in northeastern Syria yesterday with badly needed supplies, after a winter storm delayed it for several days, the United Nations said.

UN aid agencies have "started airlifting urgently needed humanitarian aid from Arbil, Iraq, to Qamishli in northeast Syria as displaced families start to face one of the harshest winters ever," a UN statement said.

The first flight chartered by the UN World Food Program (WFP) "landed today in Qamishli airport," and "WFP plans to use 11 more airlifts to move enough food to feed over 30,000 people for one month," it said.

WFP plans to send a total of some 400 tons of aid, while UN refugee agency UNHCR will send 300 tons of relief items "intended to help some 60,000 displaced people," it

said.

And children's agency UNICEF "is sending a plane-load of health kits, water and sanitation supplies."

"Two planes are contracted to do 23 rotations over the next 10 days between the two countries," the UN said. "It is the first humanitarian airlift of supplies from Iraq into Syria since the crisis in Syria erupted in March 2011."

Road access into Hasakeh province in northeastern Syria has become dangerous, and there had not been any major overland deliveries of aid to the area since May, meaning that other means were needed.

The airlift, which has the go-ahead from both the Syrian and Iraqi governments, had been expected to begin on Thursday, but was delayed by a storm that shut down Qamishli's airport.

Amin Awad, who heads the UNHCR Syria response, said the original plan was for aid to

be transported into northern and northeastern Syria by truck, but "there was a shift in the elements that controlled that road and the border and we shifted to an airlift."

But he added that airlifting aid would not be sustainable in the long run.

Meanwhile, the UNHCR plans to spend \$195 million (142 million euros) to help "winterise" Syria and the surrounding countries.

As part of the program, it has begun distributing items such as isolation tents, plastic sheeting and warm clothing, especially for children and other vulnerable people, as well as cash for fuel, Awad said.

According to UNHCR, Iraq's three-province autonomous Kurdistan region, from which the aid flights will depart, hosts more than 200,000 registered Syrian refugees -- the vast majority of those who are in Iraq.



**Holiday Menu**

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**Feuilles Menu (Choose one)**

**HOLIDAY PLATTER**  
Holiday Baked Ham, Roast Turkey served with traditional favorites, cranberry sauce, mashed potato & brown gravy, green beans almondine and herbed stuffing. Let the celebration begin!

**LAND AND SEA DELIGHT**  
A duo of Chicken Florentine & grilled fresh catch of the day topped with seafood medley

**STEAK LOVERS**  
Beef Tenderloin with mushroom sauce, stuffed potato and sautéed vegetables

**ALBERTO'S FRESH CATCH**  
Fish à la Meunière served with wild rice & green beans almondine

**SEAFOOD TRIO**  
A perfect combination of shrimps scampi, grilled scallops and fried calamari served with wild rice and fresh vegetable

**STUFFED PORKLOIN D'ANGELO**  
Roasted herb stuffed porkloin served with loaded potato, fresh vegetable and herbed brown gravy

**CHEF SPECIAL**  
Chicken Piccata with spinach and topped with artichoke sauce, served wild rice and green beans almondine

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## Bachelet elected Chile president for 2014-2018 term



SANTIAGO (AFP) - Socialist Michelle Bachelet was swept back into office Sunday as Chile's next president, electoral officials said, as her rival recognized the win.

Bachelet, 62, would take office March 11 to succeed conservative billionaire President Sebastian Pinera. She had served as Chile's first woman president back in 2006.

"It is clear at this point. She won. And we congratulate her. Later on, I will go speak with her personally," rival Evelyn Matthei told reporters.

The national electoral board said Bachelet earned 62.59 percent of the vote against Matthei's 37.40 percent, with 56 percent of votes tallied.

Bachelet's contest with Matthei marked the first time in Latin America that a presidential runoff was held between two women.

More than 13 million Chileans were eligible to vote Sunday, but this year's race marked the first time that voting in a presidential election was voluntary in Chile.

Bachelet has focused on greater social justice in a country that has the highest per capita income of any Latin American country.

She has proposed increasing taxes to raise \$8.2 billion for the state coffers. She wants everyone, not just the rich, to have access to free post-secondary education.

Bachelet also hopes to quickly move on sweeping reforms that most Chileans want, which include overhauling the constitution, a legacy of the era of dictator Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990).

She plans to bring Chile in line with a wave of social liberalism sweeping once conservative Latin America, which include legalizing abortion and opening discussions on same-sex marriage.

## MOKO RESIDENCE 2

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9	605m²	
10	608m²	
11	608m²	Sold
12	627m²	
13	617m²	
14	982m²	Sold
15	679m²	
16	626m²	
17	609m²	Sold
18	609m²	Sold
19	631m²	
20	632m²	
21	630m²	Sold
22	630m²	Sold
23	630m²	Sold
24	614m²	Sold
25	630m²	Sold
26	628m²	
27	672m²	Sold
28	701m²	Sold
29	609m²	Sold
30	609m²	Sold
31	609m²	Sold
32	630m²	Sold
33	630m²	Sold
34	630m²	Sold
35	630m²	Sold
36	630m²	Sold
37	630m²	Sold
38	612m²	

## FARC set for unilateral ceasefire try

BOGOTA (AFP) - Colombia's FARC rebels began a 30-day unilateral ceasefire yesterday as peace talks continue with the government to try to end Latin America's longest insurgency.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

asked its units to "cease fire and hostilities for 30 days" from December 15 in a message last week from Havana where the talks are being held.

President Juan Manuel Santos' government rejects the idea of any ceasefire until a peace deal has been signed.

Colombia has endured five decades of conflict that has left hundreds of thousands dead and displaced more than 4.5 million.

The FARC -- Colombia's largest and oldest rebel group, which was established in 1964 -- has 7,000 to 8,000 fighters.



## Gold Coast Aruba: This is the time to invest

--Management of Gold Coast Aruba, the island's newest and most innovative gated community, reports that sales have been very good and encouraging as the global economy recovers and people looking to purchase vacation homes have found that Gold Coast is an outstanding investment value. Director of Sales, Fito Croes has noticed a surprising percentage of owners in reality do not spend a great amount of time personally to use the villas or town homes they purchase, but are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," he remarked, "but I am gratified by how many are buying because they felt secure with real estate investment on Aruba. They really study the history and economy of the island and are impressed with the political stability and continually increasing value of prime locations. Gold Coast is in the heart of Malmok, considered Aruba's most exclusive community where the value of properties has only increased over time. It is only minutes to the best beaches and all the action, and yet offers a quiet and secluded getaway, we are very pleased by the response to our



concept."

Fito, with his sister Mayrin and brother Rudy operate Cas Bon, which has been constructing homes and building developments for all budgets for nearly twenty years. "Gold Coast Aruba is the jewel in our crown," observes Fito. "We were very excited about this project and the scope of actual and planned facilities and amenities. We have spoken to countless island visitors to find out what they would really want in a permanent residence on Aruba, and took from there."

Input from frequent vacationers who have dreamed of their own home in Aruba contributed to the realization of Gold Coast Aruba which when

complete will be a community of 260 town homes, villas and condominiums with a stunning clubhouse complemented by two additional community pool areas. The Clubhouse is about to start construction and will offer to the community homeowners and visitors 2 tennis courts, full service spa and fitness center as well as a stunning pool area and is expected to be complete by early 2013. It will also house a restaurant and mini-market.

Owners who purchased upon the groundbreaking only a few short years ago, are already enjoying a nearly 50% appreciation on their investment, particularly those taking advantage of the on site management's rental services pro-

gram. There is always a great demand for Aruba and facilities such as those at Gold Coast, make it easy for some owners to see a valuable return on their investment.

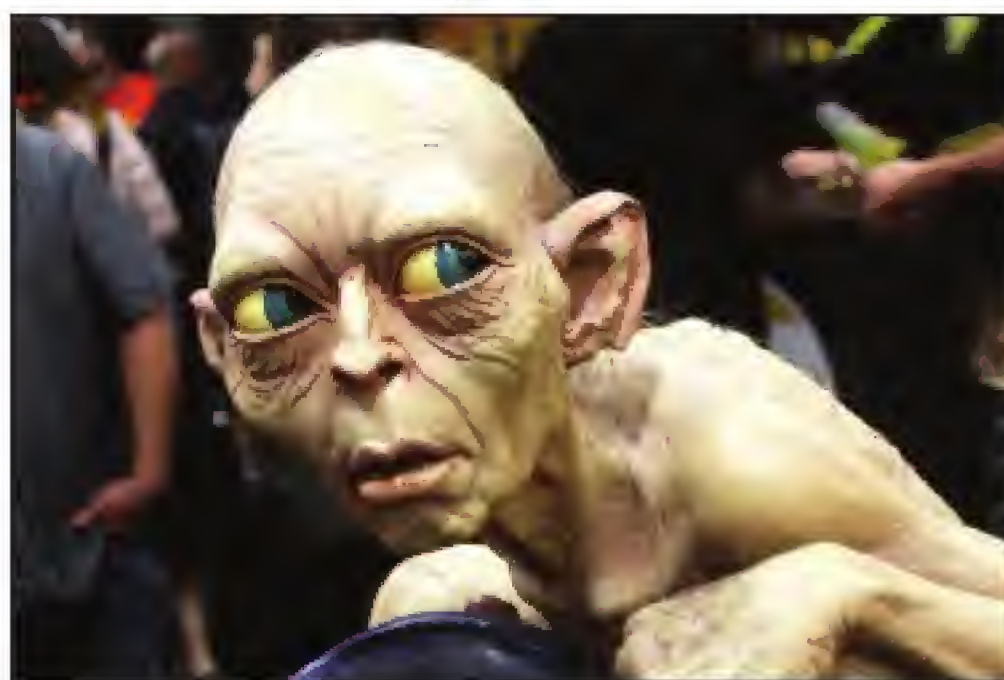
The design of the residences and public areas is open, airy and spacious, taking full advantage of the island environment, with quality construction and finishing available. Partnering with two of Aruba's top providers of kitchens and bathrooms enables developers to offer custom options allowing buyers to individualize their homes. An elegant and chic furniture package is available or island designers will assist owners in finishing the décor to their specific tastes.

There are many aspects to purchasing property; not the least is the future value of the investment. To further enhance this, Gold Coast management have inaugurated a number of in-house services and have recently become affiliated Interval International, the world's largest network of vacation ownership properties which provides an unlimited international pool of investors to tap for ownership and rental prospects. Property exchange for a vacation in another destination is also available through the Interval International affiliation. Gold Coast's own rental services have also proven highly successful in assisting owners in renting their villas; 24-hour security and maintenance services also tip the scales when it is time to make a decision. Aside from all this, housekeeping, child care, catering services, car rental through its partnership with AVIS car rental are also available as well as pre-shopping services so cupboards and refrigerators are stocked upon arrival, which can also be arranged through their property management department. Personnel are also available to assist in arranging restaurant reservations and island activities.

Visit their website: [www.goldcoastaruba.com](http://www.goldcoastaruba.com)

for more details and availability or call 586-2200 to arrange a personal tour.

## Lack of precious vitamin made Gollum a loser



PARIS (AFP) - Think kindly of the dragon Smaug. Shed a tear for Gollum. And give an orc a hug.

If only they had tucked into the occasional quiche and salad or a touch of smoked

salmon, or had a few sessions on a sunbed. How much kinder history would have been to them.

So suggests an offbeat study, released on Sunday, which concludes that the evil

characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit" lost their battle against men, elves and dwarves because they suffered from vitamin deficiency.

Shunning sunlight, surviving on a sketchy or unbalanced diet based on rotten meat or (in Gollum's case) the occasional blind fish, they lacked vitamin D, a key component for healthy bones and muscle strength.

The idea is proposed by Nicholas Hopkinson, a doctor at Imperial College London and his son Joseph, in the Christmas edition of the Medical Journal of Australia.

They scoured "The Hobbit" for references to characters' living conditions, habits and diet.

They used these clues to rate each character for levels of vitamin D, produced when the skin is exposed to ultraviolet light or derived from foods such as oily fish, egg yolks and cheese.

Bilbo Baggins, the hero of "The Hobbit," had a vitamin D-enriched life, they found.

True, Bilbo lived in a hole, but it had windows and he enjoyed sitting in the sun in his garden.

"The hobbit diet is clearly varied, as he is able to offer cake, tea, seed cake, ale, porter, red wine, raspberry jam, mince pies, cheese, pork pie, salad, cold chicken, pickles and apple tart to the dwarves who visit to engage him on the business of burglary," Imperial College said

in a press release.

In contrast, the villains spend most of their time in darkness, and their diet is poor or single-sourced.

"Systematic textual analysis of 'The Hobbit' supports our initial hypothesis that the triumph of good over evil may be assisted to some extent by the poor diet and lack of sunlight experienced by the evil characters," the researchers conclude.

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## Tips for healthy skin

### Do not Smoke

Smoking makes your skin look older and contributes to wrinkles. Smoking narrows the tiny blood vessels in the outermost layers of skin, which decreases blood flow. This depletes the skin of oxygen and nutrients that are important to skin health. Smoking also damages collagen and elastin — the fibers that give your skin its strength and elasticity. In addition, the repetitive facial expressions you make when smoking — such as pursing your lips when inhaling and squinting your eyes to keep out smoke — can contribute to wrinkles.

If you smoke, the best way to protect your skin is to quit. Ask your doctor for tips or treatments to help you stop smoking.

### Treat your skin gently

Daily cleansing and shaving can take a toll on your

skin. To keep it gentle:

**Limit bath time.** Hot water and long showers or baths remove oils from your skin. Limit your bath or shower time, and use warm — rather than hot — water.

**Avoid strong soaps.** Strong soaps and detergents can strip oil from your skin. Instead, choose mild cleansers.

**Shave carefully:** To protect and lubricate your skin, apply shaving cream, lotion or gel before shaving. For the closest shave, use a clean, sharp razor. Shave in the direction the hair grows, not against it.

**Pat dry.** After washing or bathing, gently pat or blot your skin dry with a towel so that some moisture remains on your skin.

**Moisturize dry skin.** If your skin is dry, use a moisturizer that fits your skin type. For daily use, consider a moisturizer that contains SPF.

## Survey finds binge TV viewers feel no shame

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - The majority of people who watch television online say they regularly indulge in binge-watching, and they feel no shame about it, according to a survey released Friday.

Market research firm Harris Interactive quizzed 1,500 US adults who stream TV shows online at least once a week about their viewing habits, and the results confirmed a trend toward watching multiple episodes of a given show in one sitting. The survey was sponsored by on-demand streaming service

Netflix.

Sixty-one percent said they regularly indulged in binge viewing, which nearly three in four respondents defined as watching two to six episodes at a time.

Seventy-three percent said they had positive feelings about binge viewing, and 51 percent said they prefer doing so with other people.

"The couch potato has awoken," cultural anthropologist Grant McCracken said in a statement.

"Binge watching has really taken off due to a perfect

storm of better TV, our current economic climate and the digital explosion of the last few years."

Netflix delighted binge viewers in February, when it dropped all 13 episodes of the first season of its Emmy-nominated political drama "House of Cards" in one fell swoop.

Rivals took the cue, with Amazon.com inaugurating its foray into original programming, the comedy "Alpha House" starring John Goodman, with the simultaneous release of its first three episodes on its video streaming service.

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## China makes 'giant leap' with Jade Rabbit moon rover landing

BEIJING (AFP) - China's Jade Rabbit rover vehicle drove onto the moon's surface on Sunday after the first lunar soft landing in nearly four decades, a huge advance in the country's ambitious space programme.

The Yutu, or Jade Rabbit, was deployed at 4:35 am (2035 GMT Saturday), several hours after the Chang'e-3 probe landed on the moon, said the official news agency Xinhua.

China is the third country to complete a lunar rover mission after the United States and the then-Soviet Union -- a decade after it first sent an astronaut into space.

It plans to establish a permanent space station by 2020 and eventually send a human to the moon.

The mission is seen as a symbol of China's rising global stature and technological advancement, as well as the Communist Party's success in reversing the fortunes of the once-impooverished nation.

"One Giant Leap for China," read the headline in Hong Kong's Sunday Morning Post, evoking the words in 1969 of American astronaut Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon.

"Chang'e-3 has successfully carried out a soft landing on the moon. This makes China the world's third nation to achieve a lunar soft landing," the Chinese Academy of Sciences said in an online post on the mission's official page on Sina Weibo, a Chinese Twitter equivalent.

The landing, nearly two weeks after blast-off, was the first of its kind since the former Soviet Union's mission in 1976.

The potential to extract the moon's resources has been touted as a key reason behind

Beijing's space programme, with the moon believed to hold uranium, titanium, and other mineral resources, as well as offering the possibility of solar power generation.

"China wants to go to the moon for geostrategic reasons and domestic legitimacy," said China space expert Joan Johnson-Freese, a professor of national security affairs at the US Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

"With the US exploration moribund at best, that opens a window for China to be perceived as the global technology leader -- though the US still has more, and more advanced, assets in space."

The rover will spend about three months exploring the moon's surface and looking for natural resources.

It can climb slopes of up to 30 degrees and travel at 200 metres per hour, according to the Shanghai Aerospace Systems Engineering Research Institute.

## E-trash to leap by a third by 2017: data



PARIS (AFP) - Electronic and electrical gadgets that have reached the end of their life are expected to jump by a third in volume by 2017, a rise that poses mighty challenges for sorting and recycling, according to figures published on Sunday.

By the end of 2017, the total annual volume from refrigerators, TVs, mobile phones, electronic toys, computers, screens and other electrical or electronic castoffs will reach 65.4 million tonnes, 33 percent up on

the end of 2012.

This amount "could fill a line of 40-tonne trucks end-to-end on a highway straddling three-quarters of the Equator," said Solving the E-Waste Problem Initiative, a partnership of UN organisations, grassroots groups and industry.

The report found that in volume terms, China in 2012 produced the biggest amount of e-trash that was put on the market -- 11.1 million tonnes, followed by the United States at 10 million tonnes.

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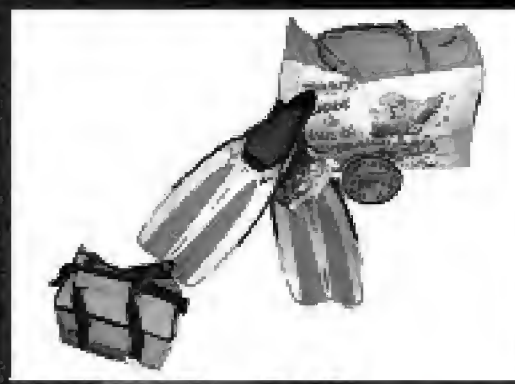
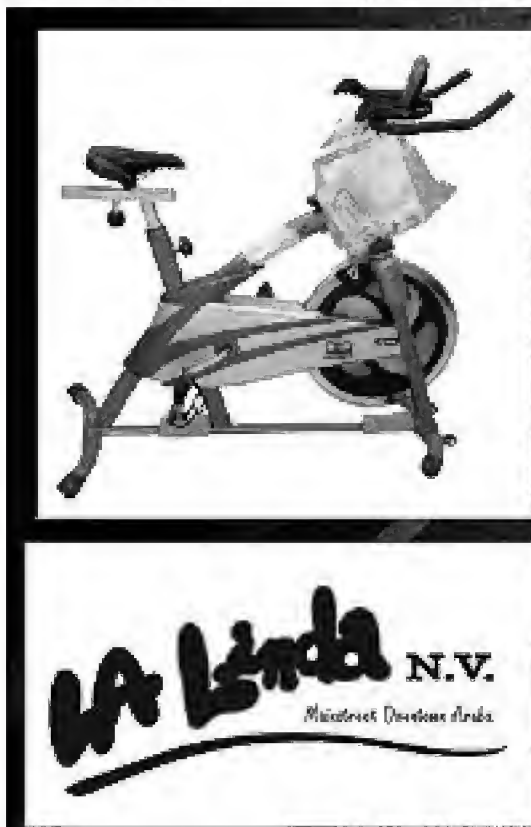
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## CBA to conduct Consumer Confidence Survey in January 2014

ORANJESTAD -- During the period of December 14, 2013 through January 5, 2014 the Centrale Bank van Aruba (CBA) will conduct the Consumer Confidence Survey (CCS) for the fourth quarter. The CCS consists of 21 short multiple choice questions relating to the Aruban population's perception of and expectation on the state of the Aruban economy and on its spending habit.

The CCS provides the CBA with valuable information used for its macro-economic analyses and forecasts, and helps as well in determining the sentiments of Aruban consumers, which furthers the CBA's understanding of domestic economic developments. The CCS may also aid policy makers when determining economic and financial policies and actions. The results of this period will be compared with the previous surveys to analyze the change in the population's sentiments.

During this period, a group of 5 interviewers, hired by the CBA, will survey a total of 400 respondents in order to gather the important data. Interviewers will be stationed at several strategic locations on the island, such as the civil

registry office and the post office, carrying an identification badge as proof that they are working on behalf of the CBA. Due to the simplicity of the questions (e.g., would you say that you (and your household) are better off or worse off financially than you were 6 months ago?), the interview should not take more than 10 minutes to complete.

Given the importance of the CCS for Aruba, the CBA calls upon the Aruban public to fully cooperate with this survey. The interviewed persons can be assured that the CBA will treat the information gathered in this survey with the highest level of confidentiality, and the results will be published in an aggregated form only. For further information please contact Mr. Jonathan Upegui (tel. 5252215; e-mail j.uegui@cbaruba.org) of the Research Department of the CBA.

## S. Korea's Hyundai Heavy wins \$1.4 bn Kuwait deal

SEOUL (AFP) - South Korea's Hyundai Heavy Industries said Sunday that its consortium with French firm Sidem has won a \$1.4 billion deal to build a power plant and a desalination facility in Kuwait.

Under the deal with Kuwait's energy authorities, Hyundai would build a gas-fired power plant worth \$970 million, while Sidem would construct a water desalination plant in a combined complex about 100 km (62 miles) south of Kuwait City. Construction would start this month and be completed towards the end of 2016, Hyundai said in a statement.

The power plant would have a production capacity of 1,500 megawatts while the desalination plant would produce up to 436,000 cubic metres of water a day.

In Kuwait, meanwhile, the National Bank of Kuwait said that it heads a consortium that includes Japanese lenders which will arrange a \$1.43 billion loan to build the Al-Zour North Power project.

That venture has been awarded to Japan's Sumitomo Corporation, France's GDF SUEZ Energy International and Kuwait's Abdullah Hamad Al-Sagar and Brothers for \$2.5 billion.

Besides NBK, the other lenders include Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI), Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ Ltd., Sumitomo Mitsui Bank-

ing Corporation and Standard Chartered Bank.

A special company was established for the project in which the winning consortium has a stake of 40 percent and the government holds 10 percent, while 50 percent is to be distributed to citizens as free shares.

Production of power and freshwater will be sold to the ministry of electricity and water for 40 years.

## Currency of the future or asset bubble?

PARIS (AFP) - Once the preserve of cyber geeks or of dodgy traders, the virtual currency bitcoin can now not only be used to buy goods online but also pay for a degree at the University of Nicosia. Yet the newfound popularity of the currency, which was worth almost nothing until April 2011 and which now trades at around \$1,000, may well prove its undoing.

Market watchers and regulators are at odds over how the bitcoin should be handled, but as the currency gains prominence, voices warning against its use are getting louder.

France's central bank has slapped it down as "highly speculative" while China's said it should not be used as a currency and banned its banks from providing services and products related to bitcoin.

The European Union's banking watchdog also issued a warning to the digital currency's users, telling them: "You should be fully aware and understand their specific characteristics".

Launched in 2009 as the invention of a mysterious computer guru who goes by the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto, bitcoins are created through a complex mathematical formula. Unlike hard currencies, it is neither backed up by a country's economic activity nor issued by a national authority.

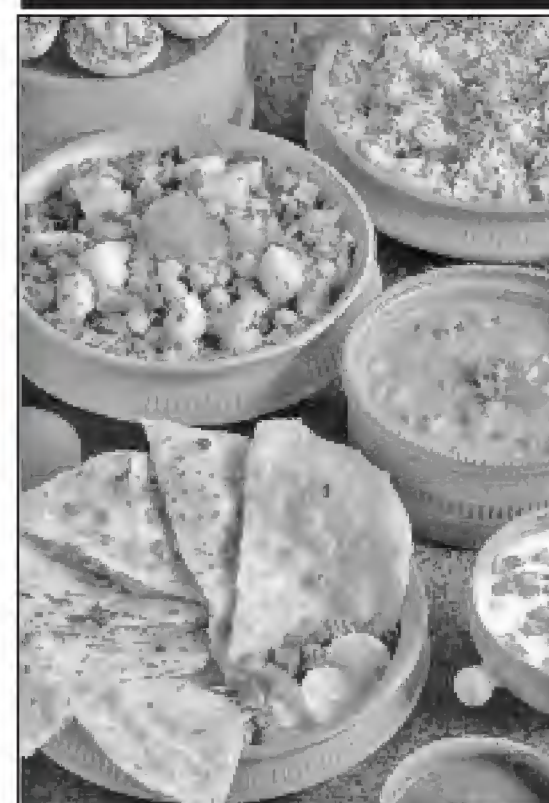
## Venezuela evaluates raising gasoline price



A petrol station worker points at the petrol price in Caracas, Venezuela. Venezuelan Vice President Jorge Arreaza said that the government will discuss with the people and the business sector a potential rise in the petrol price, one of the world cheapest. (AFP PHOTO)

## SATURDAY'S Crossword Answer

TOED	LABOR
WADE	ADORED
OFUS	DENISE
CITY	GAP
SHARE	SILLO
HOTEL	TUNES
RAID	ABASE
IGO	POLL
LINENS	ISIT
LEAVES	MINI
SLEET	ENDS



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## COMICS



## CROSSWORD



## CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

- 1 Electric units  
6 "\_\_\_ Buy Me Love"  
10 Veronica's crush  
11 Runs a tab  
12 Change into  
13 Actress Downey  
14 Motor vehicle  
15 Beauty \_\_\_  
17 Theater-ticket portion  
19 That lady  
20 Zeus's wife  
22 Aspirin's target  
25 "The Lady \_\_\_ Tramp" (2 wds.)  
27 Small pie  
29 Bunker and Head  
32 Heartache  
33 Mongolian desert  
34 Urges  
37 Bullfight cheers  
38 Urban

## locales

- 39 One son of Eve  
40 Elude  
DOWN  
1 Door decoration  
2 Accumulate  
3 Conjunction, for short  
4 Director Burton  
5 Leaks through  
6 Right

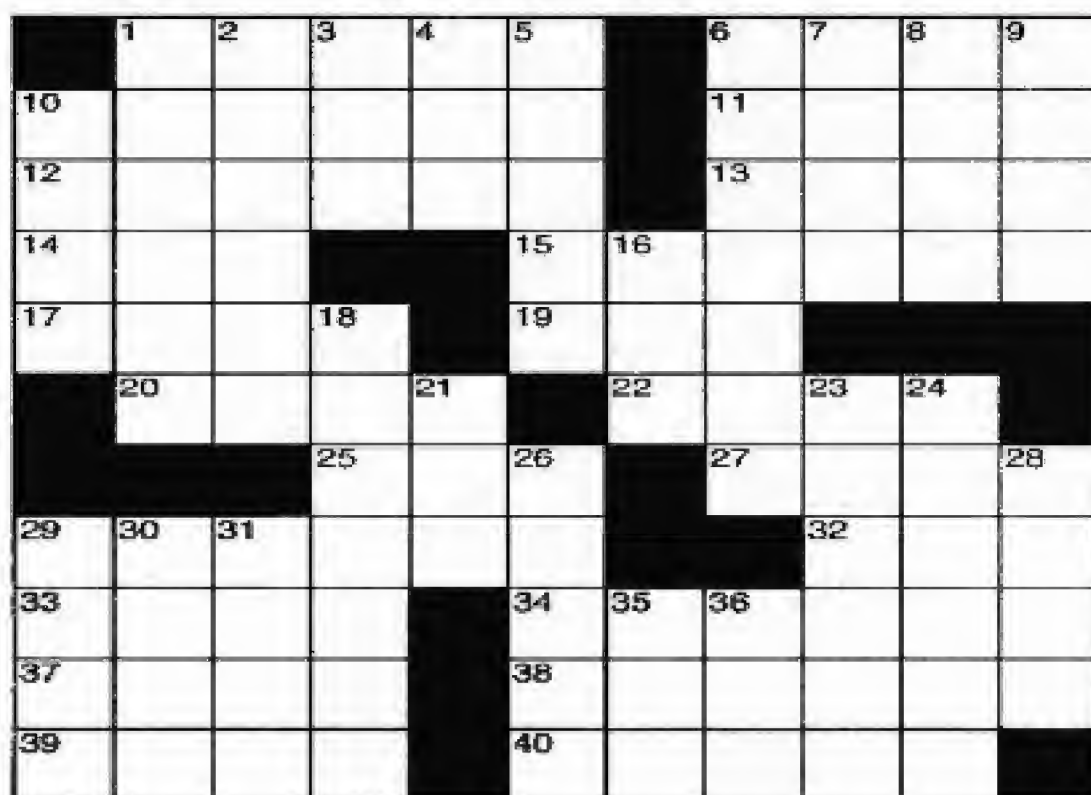
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- 7 On the lam, military style  
8 "Finding \_\_\_" (2003 film)  
9 Romanov ruler  
10 Rudiments  
16 "By Jove!"  
18 Part of BBC  
21 Burnt remains  
23 Honolulu's

## locale

- 24 Eaten away  
26 Animal rights gp.  
28 \_\_\_ True-heart  
29 Psyches  
30 Pineapple brand  
31 "Oh, sure!" (2 wds.)  
35 Cato's 54  
36 Ike's theater



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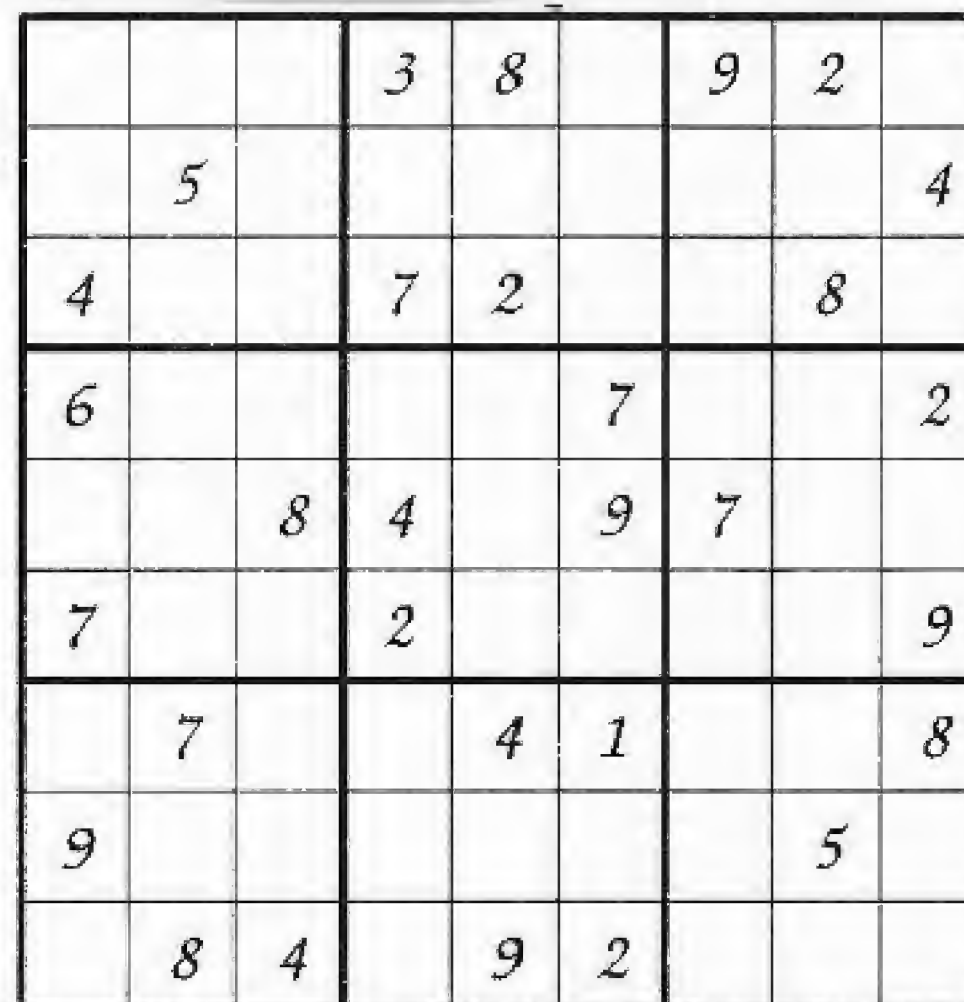
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9	5	8	1	4	3	2	7	6
8	3	2	1	7	5	9	4	6
6	1	5	9	2	8	7	3	4
5	9	4	6	3	7	8	1	2
2	7	8	3	1	5	6	9	4
1	8	9	5	2	4	6	3	7
7	4	6	9	1	3	2	5	8
3	2	7	8	9	1	4	6	5

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9  
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.  
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



## Don't miss the seasonal favorite "The Nutcracker" at Cas di Cultura tomorrow night!



The Nutcracker



Adriana and Leonid Kozlov

ORANJESTAD -- World-famous ballet star Leonid Kozlov, former principal dancer with the Bolshoi and New York City Ballets, has made Aruba his home with his ballerina wife, Adriana. A regular visitor to the island for two decades, he had already begun interacting with the local community five years ago by staging the popular holiday production of his creative vision for Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker." This was the first time the famed ballet had ever been staged on Aruba.

Tomorrow evening, December 17, the celebrated couple and a troupe of dancers from their Kozlov Dance Academy on Aruba, will present the holiday favorite at 7:00 pm at Cas di Cultura in Oranjestad. This is a one-time only performance.

Kozlov Dance Academy's production of "The Nutcracker" was first staged for the Australian Ballet at the

Sydney Opera House in 1981. The lush sets and costumes, produced by artisans of the Bolshoi Theatre Workshop, are enchanting, as is this ballet to Tchaikovsky's immortal score. It is a beloved holiday tradition to be enjoyed by all ages.

As Director of Kozlov Dance Academy, Leonid Kozlov has been delighting audiences in the United States and Aruba since 1993 with his dazzling choreography. He will dance the leading roles of Herr Drosselmeyer and the Cavalier along with his wife, Adriana, in multiple roles, including the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Tickets are 35 Afls / \$20 US, and can be purchased at Cas di Cultura, Van Dorp Bookstore and Kozlov Dance Academy, located at Vondellaan 19-D, as well as at the door.

For additional information, call 564-2670 or visit [www.kozlovdance.com](http://www.kozlovdance.com).

## Acqua Condominium Aruba announces that construction has been progressing at a brisk pace.

The East Tower, overlooking Palm Beach boasts 208 condos, spread over 14 floors. The two top building floors embrace 16 penthouse apartments with majestic views. The building is simply awaiting the windows and a few finishing touches, to conclude construction, very possibly by the end of this year. Following the completion of the elegant club house, the tropical landscaped pool and the spacious parking lots, the condos will be delivered to their proud new owners. Ground has been cleared for the North Tower, which will follow as soon as the East Tower is completed.

A spokesperson for Acqua Condo Aruba reports that the project is receiving tremendous attention, particularly for the winter months. Snow-birds longing to reside in a vacation home on Aruba are now able to visualize this dream coming true, in a manner that leaves them utterly care free when not in residence.

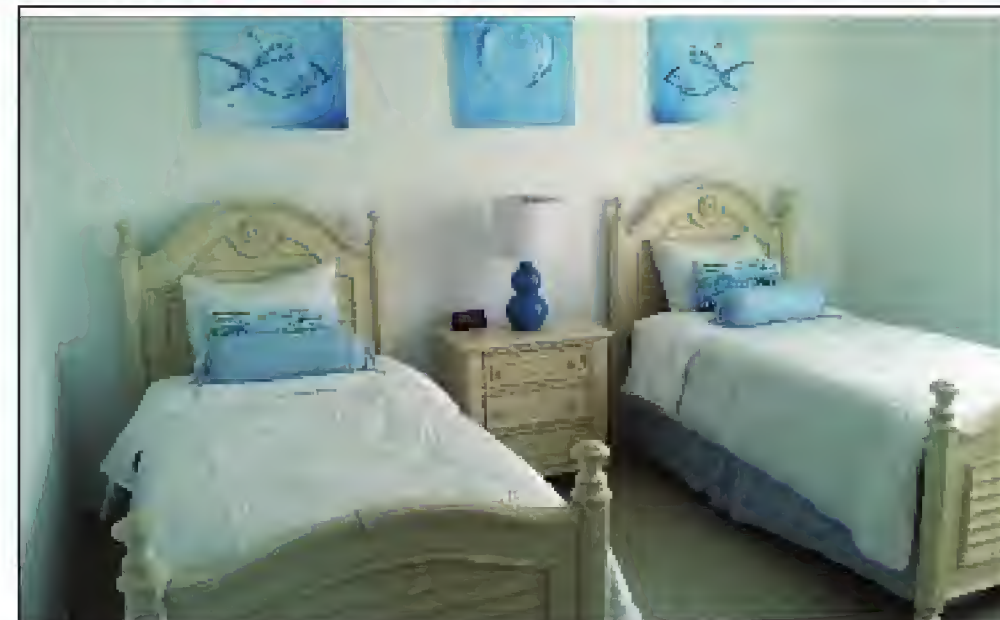
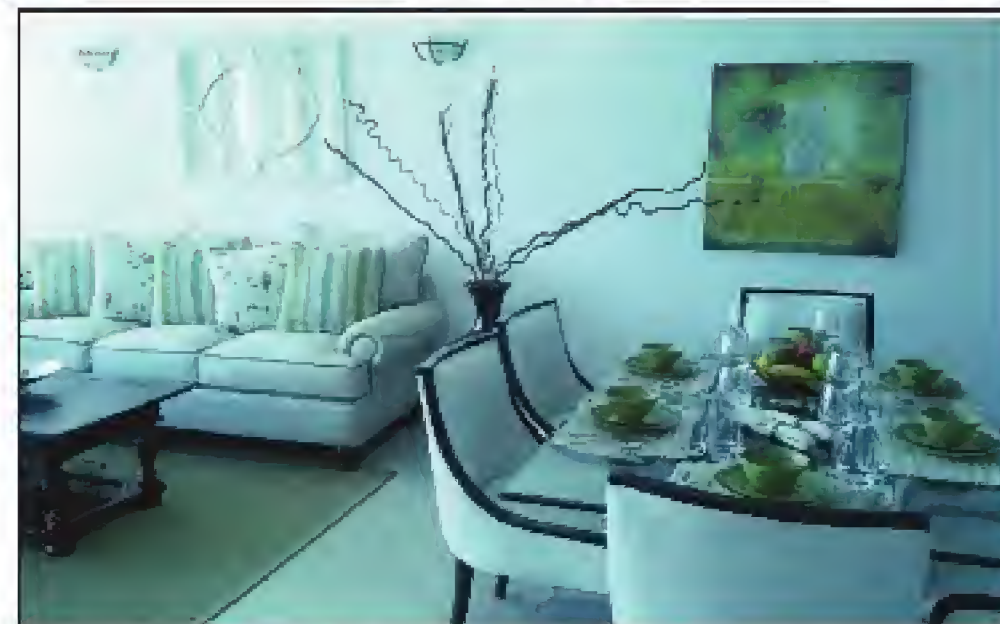
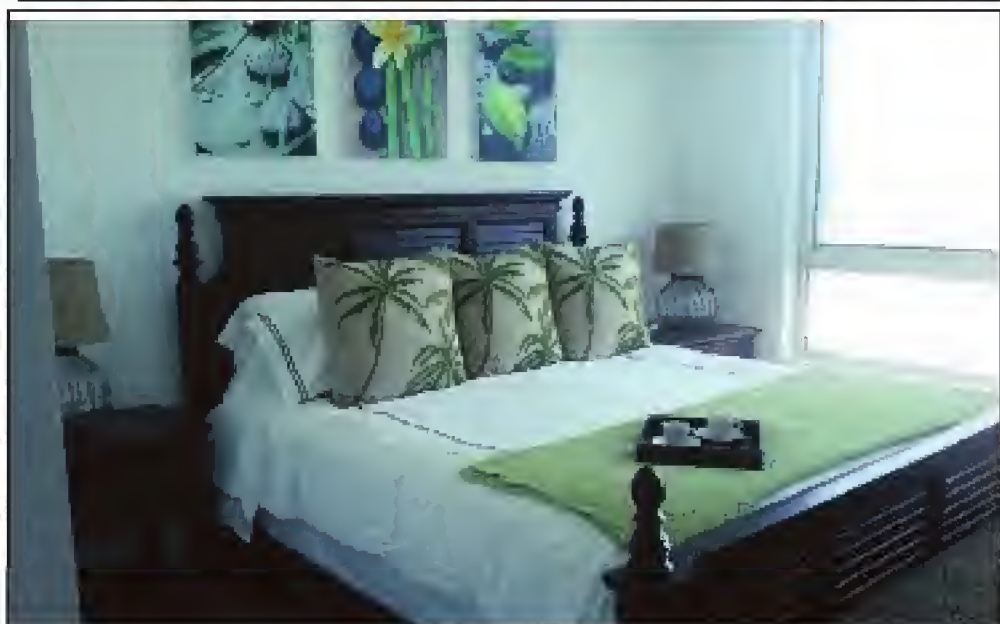
Making the decision to purchase and acting on it quickly, was recently made even more imperative. In November of 2010, the island government of Aruba reiterated its commitment to a building moratorium for the next 10 years, making Acqua Condominium a truly unique investment opportunity, as it is the one and only high-rise condo project, on property land, in the island's most-desired location.

In view of the moratorium news, and the project's lucrative position, developers were compelled to discontinue the pre-construction discounts. Nevertheless, other purchase incentives have introduced. Special discount offers in effect at present are:

Pay 30% down payment and get 10% discount, 50% down payment, get 15% discount, pay in full for a 25% discount. Prices start at \$ 296,800 for a 2-bedroom/2 bathroom apartment. Paying cash will allow the buyer to obtain this very same unit for only \$ 222,600 - remarkable savings!

Other incentives: The opportunity to profit from your purchase is also available to buyers when they place their unit in a rental pool year.

If the image of Acqua Condominium tugs at your heartstrings, you are invited to visit the sales gallery and the two



elegant model-suites available for viewing, fully finished with luxurious touches and high-end amenities.

allowing you to return to Aruba as often as you wish.

You will find the website very helpful.

Take a virtual tour and garner info regarding all legal documents, floor plans, furnishings and finishing at: [www.acquaruba.com](http://www.acquaruba.com)

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## Serena takes wrecking ball to rivals

PARIS (AFP) - She will be 33 in 2014 and it'll be 19 years since she made her WTA debut, but Serena Williams remains the dominant force in women's tennis condemning out-classed, under-powered rivals to the shadows.

The American diva finished 2013 with 11 titles while her major triumphs at the French and US Opens took her Grand Slam haul to 17, one off the mark shared by Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova and just five away from Steffi Graf's Open Era record of 22.

In a year of staggering dominance, Williams enjoyed a match record of 78 wins against just four defeats, claimed the season-ending WTA Championships title and became the oldest number one player.

Her \$12,385,572 total prize money smashed the previous season record of \$7,923,920 set by Victoria Azarenka in 2012 and at one stage she went on a 34-match winning streak, just one short of the record set by sister Venus in 2000.

She fired 480 aces which was more than Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic, Andy Murray and Roger Federer managed.

And just for good measure, she was also on hand to supply some of the best quips and controversies, leading to spectacular public spats with the likes of Maria Sharapova and compatriot Sloane Stephens.

Despite her complete control of the women's game, Williams insists there is always room for improvement, starting at the Australian



Open where last year she was knocked out in the fourth round by Stephens, a defeat which sparked a year-long feud between the two.

"I have some areas where I can do a lot better for next year and I look forward to it," said Williams.

"My goal is just to go a year in Australia without twisting an ankle. That's all I'm going to start with."

Williams believes becoming the oldest woman to win the French Open was a key triumph, a belief no doubt fired by her blossoming personal relationship with French coach Patrick Mouratoglou.

"The French Open was probably the thing that stands out most," she said after a second Paris title to add to her first from 2002.

Victory in Paris was achieved with a straight sets win over defending champion Sharapova, leaving the Russian without a victory over the American in almost

a decade.

The pair's tense relationship reached boiling point at Wimbledon when they traded verbal blows over their respective love lives.

The spat did nothing for their Wimbledon campaigns - Williams losing in the fourth round to eventual runner-up Sabine Lisicki while Sharapova slumped to a second round loss to Portuguese qualifier Michelle Larcher de Brito.

Sharapova played just one more match in the year -- an opening round loss to Stephens in Cincinnati in August -- before calling it quits with a shoulder injury.

The Russian star, still comfortably the world's highest-earning sportswoman, has hired Sven Groeneveld, the former coach of Monica Seles, to help her in 2014 after splitting with long-term coach Thomas Hogstedt.

World number two Victoria Azarenka remains Williams's biggest rival.

The statuesque Belarusian began 2013 by successfully defending her Australian Open title and followed it with victory over Williams in the Doha tournament.

Another win over the American in Cincinnati buoyed her ahead of the US Open, but the 24-year-old suffered a second successive final defeat to the American.

The year wasn't entirely dominated by Williams and Azarenka as Wimbledon witnessed one of the most unlikely title triumphs when French jumping jack Marion Bartoli defeated a tearful Lisicki in the final.

Mindful of lightning not striking twice, Bartoli quit tennis four weeks later.

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## Juve move six points clear, Napoli stun Inter



**Tevez celebrates his second goal**

MILAN (AFP) - Carlos Tevez scored a hat-trick as Juventus bounced back from their Champions League exit with a comprehensive 4-0 victory over Sassuolo on Sunday which took their lead over Roma to six points.

Antonio Conte's side exited Europe's premier club competition on Wednesday after a 1-0 defeat to Galatasaray in snow-hit Istanbul dropped the Italian champions to third in Group B and into the Europa League.

Conte had since set the target of winning both pre-Christmas games, at home to Sassuolo and away to Atalanta, and Juve completed the first task with consummate ease ahead of Roma's trip to Milan on Monday.

It was Juve's eighth consecutive win without conceding a goal and goalkeeper and captain Gianluigi Buffon told Sky Sport Italia: "It was

a good way to make amends for Wednesday.

"The elimination hurt us, but now there's another trophy we now have to try and win."

Juve remain top on 43 points and Roma have even more incentive to win in Milan on Monday after Napoli closed the gap on the Giallorossi to two points after a thrilling 4-2 win over Inter, who were left in fifth place following Fiorentina's 3-0 defeat of Bologna earlier in the day.

Earlier, a brace from Miroslav Klose in a 2-0 win over Livorno handed Lazio only their fifth win of the season to ease the pressure on under-fire coach Vladimir Petkovic.

Fiorentina capitalised on Bologna's poor form to score three unanswered goals at the Stadio Artemio Franchi, with Giuseppe Rossi notably taking his league-leading tally to 13 goals.



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## Richard van der Wal 14-fold Aruban Sunfish Sailing Champion



ORANJESTAD-- Richard van der Wal recently won the Aruban Sunfish Sailing Championship 2013. The performance was remarkable since Van der Wal won the championship for the 14th time since 1996. Competition for second and third was fierce with Randy Brown becoming second and Theo Poiesz claiming third.

The ranking list 2013 of Sunfish Club was won this year by Richard van der Wal followed by Job Laboyrie (2nd) and Peter Prinsen (3rd). In addition to the championship, the ranking list also entails other friendly and long distance races. The "wisselstrop", a trophy for encouragement, was awarded this year to Frank Bonset who made his come-back.

During the year there was international participation with one competitor from Bonaire, one from St. Maarten and one from The Netherlands. Next to the competition there was more attention for recreational sailing and cooperation with other clubs such as the Youth Watersports Aruba Foundation (SYWA).

During a closing dinner the board of Sunfish Club Aruba (SCA) congratulated Richard van der Wal for his exceptional performance and handed him the "Ernie Kervel rotating trophy".

Due to her great stability the Sunfish is very suitable for Aruba's coastal waters. New members are more than welcome. More information is available on the new Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/sunfishclubaruba](http://www.facebook.com/sunfishclubaruba).

Photos depict Richard van der Wal posing with the Cup and Richard during the Aruba Regatta 2013.

## Peerless Garcia takes Thai championship

Continued from pg 16

France's Alexander Levy clinched third place with a final-round 69, to end four strokes behind Stenson at the Amata Spring Country Club.

Defending champion Charl Schwartzel was among a quartet of players who shared fourth place. He hit his second consecutive 67, but was unable to recreate his 2012 masterclass.

Joining the South African on a tournament 275 were England's Justin Rose who also could not dent Garcia's lead, Yuki Kono of Japan and India's Anirban Lahiri.

Chapchai Nirat was Thailand's best finisher in joint eighth place with America's Rickie Fowler.

"It was great to win in my last tournament of the year," said Garcia, who sank six birdies and dropped two shots in his final round.

The win is expected to move him up into a top-10 world ranking.

With the in-form Stenson his main challenger on the final day, Garcia said he knew he could not afford too many slip-ups.

"Henrik has been playing so well lately, I could not afford to slip up," Garcia said, admitting he stuttered briefly on the last three holes of the front nine before recovering with a hat-trick of quick birdies on the back leg.

With just two holes to go he knew all he had to do was keep the ball out of the water to ensure victory.

"I hope I can carry this form into next season," he said.

The Spaniard said his girlfriend, who was his caddie for the event, played a big part in his success, but he confirmed he would return to his regular caddie next sea-

son.

Runner-up Stenson praised Garcia's performance.

"Sergio just played so well," he said. "Being four shots back I needed something really good to happen, but I missed a couple of good birdie opportunities."

US Open Champion Justin Rose said he struggled to recover from a bad start.

While he failed to win in Thailand, Rose said he had enjoyed the "fun tournament" in the Thai sun.

"But I will be happy to put down my clubs for a few weeks. I've had an amazing year."

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## France's Hollande won't attend Sochi Games opening: minister

PARIS (AFP) - French President Francois Hollande will not attend the opening ceremony of the Sochi Winter Olympics, and nor will any top officials, Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said Sunday.

"There are no plans to go," he said in an interview on Europe 1 radio.

"I wish these Games a lot of success. But there are no plans for top French officials to go," he said, without providing any reasons.

Fabius was responding to a question on whether he or Hollande would attend, after German President Joachim Gauck announced he would not go to the February 7-23

event.

Gauck has rejected media reports he is boycotting Russia over its rights record.

The country has been criticised by several rights groups for the way workers recruited to build the sporting venues in Sochi have been treated, as well as its anti-gay legislation.

It has faced a widespread Internet campaign and calls from celebrities and gay rights groups for protests at Sochi over its law banning "gay propaganda".

And last week, EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding tweeted on her official account that she would "certainly not go to Sochi as long as minorities are treated the way they are under the current Russian legislation."

Activists have urged leaders to boycott the event over human rights concerns, including a new Russian law banning "homosexual propaganda".

## Peerless Garcia takes Thai championship



BANGKOK (AFP) - Spain's Sergio Garcia cruised to his first title of the year with a four-shot win at the Thailand Golf Championship on Sunday.

day.

Looking relaxed, the Spaniard fired a four-under 68 on the final day of the \$1 million Asian Tour event, giving him a dazzling 22-under par finish of 266 for the tournament.

It was his 21st career victory and his fourth Asian Tour title.

Starting the day four shots behind, runner-up Henrik Stenson came within two shots of Garcia mid-way through the round. But that was as close as it got for the Swedish star, who matched Garcia's 68 for the round to end on an overall 270.



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